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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 15 July 2005, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Verbeke (Vice-President) (Belgium)

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Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Verbeke (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance *(continued)* (A/60/86-E/2005/77, A/60/87-E/2005/78, A/60/89-E/2005/79 and E/2005/48; E/2005/L.19)

1. **Ms. Bahemuka** (Kenya) said that while a decisive and focused response could help to reduce the negative impact of environmental disasters, man-made humanitarian crises required a shift from post-conflict initiatives to pre-conflict peacemaking and peacebuilding. The Council had an opportunity to strengthen or put in place institutional, systemic and coordination mechanisms to counter and mitigate the consequences of all types of emergencies. To that end, it was important, inter alia: to develop, put in place and strengthen early warning systems in order to identify and monitor potential emergencies; to incorporate pre-disaster preparedness and training into the institutional emergency preparedness and response framework; to forge close cooperation and coordination efforts with, and build capacity among, Governments, the United Nations system, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local communities and other partners at all stages of humanitarian crises; and to broaden the donor base, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF), voluntary contributions and other initiatives in order to make resources available at all stages and to accelerate their disbursement and distribution.

2. The overall goal was to create a framework providing for a transition from disaster to recovery, and from recovery to development. The strategic objective of moving from relief to development required serious consideration by the Council. Consistent and predictable funding was essential to prevent communities from sliding back into dependence on relief. Insufficient funding and attention by the international community understandably led to a perception of certain emergencies as forgotten or neglected. The Council must therefore strive to ensure that no emergency situation remained at the periphery of world attention. Famine, hunger and other such crises needed to be dealt with firmly, as they seriously jeopardized the attainment of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

3. **Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan) said that the Secretary-General's report (A/60/86-E/2005/77) provided a comprehensive overview of the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami disaster and the lessons learned from the humanitarian response effort. Given the adverse impact of natural disasters on sustainable development, such efforts should emphasize prevention, advocacy, awareness-raising programmes and early warning systems. Coordination of the humanitarian response at the field level was particularly important. In addition, close cooperation and effective coordination among all stakeholders was essential to ensure the efficiency of the system-wide capacity and the effectiveness of short- and medium-term relief. In that respect, it was critical to strengthen support to and the capacities of United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators and country teams.

4. Given that Azerbaijan was at risk from a range of natural disasters, a national strategy on crisis management and preparedness had been elaborated and was currently under consideration by the Government. In addition, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), his Government was implementing a national programme for developing and reorganizing the system for disaster management training. The programme focused on country-wide disaster mitigation and preparedness.

5. The Secretary-General's report on the transition from relief to development (A/60/89-E/2005/79) contained a number of ideas for future action by the United Nations system in managing post-disaster and post-conflict transitions. All transitions were unique and required flexible responses tailored to a country's specific context and circumstances. National ownership of the design, implementation and coordination of transition programmes, in both post-disaster and post-conflict situations, was essential to ensure that they had the desired impact and were sustainable. However, there was a need for efficient burden-sharing among national authorities and international humanitarian and development actors, particularly during protracted humanitarian situations involving mass displacements and limited national capacities.

6. Better coordination at the field level required special attention to avoid unnecessary duplication and to increase overall efficiency. Humanitarian assistance and funding should not be limited to providing an immediate response to a crisis but must take into account long-term needs. Capacity gaps in coordination

mechanisms must be addressed to ensure an efficient response to transition needs. Furthermore, planning of activities in post-disaster and post-conflict transitions should be improved. Regular monitoring and assessment of needs could contribute to consistent planning of the work by various stakeholders. Overall, the United Nations still had to clearly define its role in and response to humanitarian situations involving transitions from the emergency to the development phase, particularly during protracted conflicts.

7. He welcomed the reduction in the overall number of refugees, owing to successful repatriation programmes in Africa, Afghanistan and Iraq. However, the global increase in internally displaced persons was a cause for concern. Despite the considerable international response, an alarmingly high number of such persons did not receive sufficient protection and assistance. There was a strong need for concerted action by the international community to stabilize affected countries, restore their economic and social life and pave the way to development. The collaborative approach chosen to date to address the needs of internally displaced persons had been accompanied by certain gaps in coordination and protection. He noted that the system had begun to pay due attention to that problem by considering ways to further strengthen the inter-agency response. Strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance and the system's response deserved adequate attention at the September summit.

8. **Mr. Royat** (Indonesia) said that the challenge presented by humanitarian emergencies over the past year, particularly the Indian Ocean tsunami, had underscored the need to strengthen the United Nations system's humanitarian response, tools and competencies. In that regard, his Government supported the process for a humanitarian response review to strengthen coordination capacity, address gaps in sectoral capacity, improve surge capacity, strengthen financial mechanisms and, in particular, establish predictable funding for all phases of humanitarian response. The Secretary-General's recommendation to expand the use of CERF to meet rapidly increasing needs in the initial phases of emergencies, prior to the launch of an appeal, was particularly welcome.

9. Natural disasters were becoming a serious obstacle to the achievement of the international development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals. The Council should therefore send a clear message to the leaders at the forthcoming summit that more effective coordination of humanitarian assistance was needed in response to disasters. Moreover, the Council must make a serious effort to better coordinate the transition from relief to development. At the same time, it was equally vital to develop the capacity of national, regional and international institutions to prevent major loss of life.

10. One way of addressing the humanitarian response challenge was by maximizing existing capacities and improving coordination among stakeholders. Indeed, Asian and African leaders had recognized the need to establish a regional disaster management and emergency relief instrument, which should include humanitarian response assistance and a regional standby arrangement. His Government supported greater efforts by the United Nations in that regard.

11. Indonesia's response to the tsunami disaster had shifted from the emergency phase to the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, the success of which would depend on efficient coordination. However, assistance for the reconstruction of Aceh and northern Sumatra was arriving with such speed that it was overwhelming the governmental agencies and authorities. With a view to simplifying the process of tracking and evaluating funds, his Government was establishing an independent oversight board composed of national authorities and supported by independent auditors and procurement oversight agencies. Donors were invited to join that effort to ensure accountability, transparency and efficiency under a common approach. In order for his Government to be able to track non-official aid, he requested the United Nations to encourage the largest NGOs to include their funds in a broader tracking system.

12. The new challenge was how to match private sector contributions with public reconstruction priorities; it would be beneficial to share experiences and engage the private sector more effectively in such endeavours. In that regard, the United Nations could lay down best practices for private sector engagement.

13. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that an enthusiastic and immediate response to natural disasters by countries, while imperative, would not necessarily be effective without adequate coordination. In its real sense, coordination meant the harmonious functioning of elements or

groups of elements in the execution of certain movements. That principle should be applied to all relevant internal and external organizations throughout the relief and recovery operations. Meaningful coordination entailed according priority in national development plans to preparedness, prevention and the establishment of early warning systems. The key to success at the initial stage of assistance was identifying the affected areas, performing a needs assessment and carrying out appropriate planning.

14. Harmonization was better achieved by having clear mandates, a proper division of labour and involvement of experts and professionals both at Headquarters and in the field. More enhanced capacities at local, national and regional levels would result in a more effective initial response. Moreover, access to modern technology and know-how during the capacity-building process helped to ensure a more effective and timely response.

15. The success of any response depended on inter-agency coordination in the field, particularly through Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators, and on the establishment and promotion of coordination among various teams from other governmental organizations and NGOs. The affected countries had the primary responsibility for leading and coordinating all the activities of the domestic humanitarian staff and agencies, as well as those undertaken by NGOs and volunteers. Steps should be taken to devise appropriate mechanisms for timely and effective interaction between United Nations agencies and the focal authorities of affected countries. To maintain coordination over a long period of time, consistency was required not only between relief and development but from the first to the second stage. Furthermore, a distinction should be made between relief assistance and financial contributions for development.

16. Uneven or inadequate allocation of resources had an adverse impact on humanitarian operations as a whole, jeopardizing the planned collective efforts at all levels. His Government therefore supported the Secretary-General's recommendation to expand the use of CERF and called on donor countries and organizations to meet their financial pledges in a full and timely manner. The international community should also tackle cases of so-called neglected emergencies before the people affected encountered further difficulties or were hit by another disaster.

17. His Government looked forward to studying the report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on the evaluation of the humanitarian response as well as the evaluation report of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). Both reports would provide an opportunity to examine the humanitarian response to the latest emergencies and to seek ways of promoting coordination in humanitarian affairs.

18. The framework for action adopted at the recent World Conference on Disaster Reduction would have a positive impact on coordination and would substantially help to reduce loss of life from disasters, as well as losses in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries. His Government had taken significant steps to realize the recommendations in that framework and had made the preparations necessary for regional cooperation, even establishing a specialized regional collaborative centre. Full implementation and follow-up of the actions in the framework over the following 10 years at the national, regional and international levels, combined with adequate mobilization of resources, would help increase the resilience of nations and communities to disasters and mitigate the adverse consequences of the latter.

19. **Ms. Holguín Cuéllar** (Colombia) said that humanitarian assistance should be provided in accordance with international humanitarian law and the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/182 and at the request of the affected State, it should not be politicized. The country concerned had the primary role in the organization, coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance; the role of the United Nations was supportive.

20. She was therefore concerned at the statement that "Though the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians rests with States, international support is often required ... or when the State cannot protect its citizens alone." (A/60/87-E/2005/78, para. 53). Colombia reiterated that assistance by the United Nations be extended with the consent of the affected State and that all actions undertaken by the international community should be in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

21. She was also concerned at the statement that "Humanitarian agencies ... will continue ... to substitute for national authorities, rather than develop

national capacities." (A/60/89-E/2005/79, para. 40). As President Clinton had pointed out the previous day, every effort should be made to help strengthen national capacities so that States could respond more rapidly and effectively to the needs of their people. The United Nations should work more closely with States in all emergencies and help to strengthen their response capacities. Strong national capacities were the only guarantee for sustainable recovery and development.

22. Finally, she expressed her Government's appreciation to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which continued to make a fundamental contribution to humanitarian assistance while remaining true to its principles.

23. **Mr. Cumberbatch** (Cuba) noting that the international system was marked by unipolarity and the unilateral use of force, reaffirmed the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality set forth in General Assembly resolution 46/182. Providing aid to millions of people could not be used as a pretext for introducing questionable concepts that sought to rewrite international law and undermined respect for State sovereignty. When the illegal war on Iraq had begun, some of the most ardent defenders of the so-called "responsibility to protect" had chosen to remain silent; as a result hundreds of thousands of civilians had died. They had not reacted when the torture taking place in the jails of Guantanamo, Iraq and Afghanistan had been revealed.

24. Humanitarian intervention and the responsibility to protect had done nothing to promote peace and international security; in fact, they had heightened contradictions and further complicated relations between States. His delegation wondered by what authority the Human Security Unit had been established in the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as said concept did not enjoy intergovernmental support. It was hardly surprising that local populations did not welcome "humanitarian actions" carried out by the same military forces that had conducted unilateral aggressions. If humanitarian assistance was to remain independent, neutral and impartial, the coordination of that assistance should not be subordinated to occupying military forces.

25. It was unfortunate that it had taken a massive catastrophe such as the one in the Indian Ocean basin for the United Nations to re-evaluate its humanitarian assistance actions in the field of natural disasters. It was clear that humanitarian assistance should go hand in hand with an unconditional commitment to economic growth and sustainable development for underdeveloped nations. Emergency assistance contributions should not be pre-earmarked and should not be to the detriment of resources for international development cooperation. Bearing in mind that international cooperation, including three-way cooperation and South-South Cooperation, still needed to be strengthened, his delegation noted with satisfaction that the focus of the Council's deliberations on the transition from relief to development had been rectified.

26. His delegation was alarmed at the increased frequency of natural disasters because of their serious consequences for sustainable development, particularly in the developing countries. It therefore was urgent that the problems related to climate change and global warming be addressed.

27. Poverty and underdevelopment made nations even more vulnerable to natural disasters. Improved prevention, mitigation and preparedness, as well as an early response to requests from the affected countries, would help save precious lives. His delegation hoped that the implementation of the outcome of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction would help strengthen international cooperation mechanisms, and called for greater institutional and international support for the establishment in Panama of a regional office of OCHA to cover the Caribbean.

28. Finally he hoped that the proposal for expanding the Central Emergency Revolving Fund would contribute substantially to providing support for national efforts to cope with emergencies. The establishment of new financial mechanisms to ensure improved resource allocation should not be limited to the Consolidated Appeal Processes (CAPs), as that would address only a part of the problem.

29. **Mr. Kooper** (Namibia) said that strengthening the coordination of humanitarian response to disasters and complex emergencies should be viewed as an effort to enhance the ability of the United Nations to respond effectively to humanitarian crises around the world. The Council itself was instrumental in lending strategic policy support to humanitarian issues as well as risk reduction reinforcement.

30. Readily available preventive structures provided conditions for quick and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance in emergencies. However, most countries did not possess the necessary preparedness mechanisms for response to sudden emergencies. Improved structures for national and international field response to major emergencies were therefore required.

31. The humanitarian crises ravaging the Southern African subregion were precipitated by food insecurity, HIV/AIDS and poverty. His delegation recognized that the multifaceted nature of the crisis posed a particular funding challenge and supported the request of the United Nations and its partners that donors do their utmost to mitigate vulnerability in the region.

32. Namibia itself remained vulnerable to a wide range of disasters, which were adversely affecting its economic and developmental objectives. The Namibian Emergency Management Unit was currently changing from a response-oriented approach to a more proactive preparedness approach. Furthermore, the Government was currently in the process of institutionalizing a national Vulnerability Assessment Committee, which would be responsible for monitoring early disaster warning and disaster teams, preparedness and contingency planning and vulnerability mapping. The Namibian Cabinet would soon institute a legal framework for disaster management, which would serve as an overall operational instrument.

33. Although recent events had demonstrated that the humanitarian community was indeed capable of responding when requested to do so, the needs of millions of chronically vulnerable people in Africa continued to go unmet. She expressed concern at the lack of voluntary funding for neglected emergencies, and concurred with the Secretary-General that donors needed to take a flexible and informed approach which addressed the complex needs of the vulnerable.

34. **Mr. Kitaoka** (Japan) welcomed the Secretary-General's report (A/60/87-E/2005/78) which focused on enhancing response capacity at the local, national, regional and international levels and promoting international cooperation.

35. With regard to humanitarian response capacity, the first line of defence was at the local and national levels. If the crisis was overwhelming, the international community should provide assistance, with the United Nations playing an important role. The United Nations must strengthen its own capacity in order to effectively address the needs of vulnerable populations.

36. In order to use existing resources efficiently, it was necessary to identify the technical expertise of each country and establish a mechanism to mobilize it quickly in the event of a crisis. Standby arrangements between the United Nations and Member States as well as regional organizations to provide such expertise could be valuable but were sometimes hampered by, inter alia, lack of political will and financial resources. Humanitarian coordinators should be given more capacities and their role should be extended to include strategic planning.

37. His delegation supported a restructured Central Emergency Revolving Fund as a way of ensuring rapid access to the financial resources needed for an effective response in the initial phase of a humanitarian crisis. Further efforts were needed to address the problem of underfunded emergencies, as the establishment of a new funding mechanism did not always increase overall financial resources.

38. The international response to the recent tsunami disaster had been unprecedented in terms of the numbers of new donors and the size of contributions from the private sector. Mutual cooperation in humanitarian emergencies should be expanded not just by calling for more contributions, but also by sharing a sense of ownership of international humanitarian assistance. There should be increased policy dialogue with non-traditional donors, strengthened partnership in operational cooperation, and wider geographical representation with regard to the personnel employed by United Nations humanitarian organizations. The potential of private funding should also be fully explored.

39. Finally, he stressed the need to incorporate disaster prevention and mitigation into national development planning efforts. In that respect, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction should be steadily implemented.

40. **Mr. Meyer** (Brazil) said that, despite all the achievements, there was still plenty of room for systemic improvement of the United Nations humanitarian system. Capacity gaps in critical sectors such as water and sanitation, shelter, camp management and protection, needed to be addressed.

Coordination could be improved by making better use of resources and eliminating duplication.

41. Because affected States had the primary role in providing humanitarian aid within their territory, every effort should be made to build and sustain capacity and preparedness at the country level. Attention should also be given to transfer of expertise and technology.

42. During the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster, the United Nations had displayed once again its unique role in providing leadership and in coordinating the efforts of the international community. The international response to that disaster should serve as a model for response to other less-publicized crises, including the neglected emergencies in sub-Saharan Africa. The international community should deliver swiftly on all its pledges. It was necessary to ensure a more equitable distribution of humanitarian assistance so that aid could be allocated in a non-discriminatory, balanced and proportionate manner. Finally, he noted with interest the proposal to expand the use of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to include both a loan capacity and a grant component.

43. **Ms. Mapunjo** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the varied humanitarian issues being faced, from natural disaster and armed conflict to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, had their own dynamics and complexities. Her delegation was deeply concerned at the crises in Africa resulting from armed conflicts, and concerted effort was needed to address their root causes. Support and capacity-building for regional organizations and initiatives should be part of a comprehensive approach to conflict management and humanitarian response.

44. Humanitarian assistance should be a collective moral obligation without political motives, impartial and non-discriminatory. Humanitarian action and access to victims should be unimpeded and guided by international humanitarian law. Shortcomings — inadequate and unpredictable funding, uneven response resulting in "forgotten" crises, inflexible arrangements under earmarked funding, inadequate standby arrangements in regional locations for emergency response and inadequate coordination, leading to competition — could be corrected in some measure by the proposed central humanitarian emergency fund to which all States should be invited to contribute. That would facilitate coordination and permit sectoral specialization among agencies, allowing different agencies to provide leadership as the system demanded.

45. The effects of humanitarian crises could be mitigated if Member States put in place national and community programmes on humanitarian response and disaster management. Her Government had put in place a national disaster management policy that sought to mainstream disaster management as an integral part of development programmes in all sectors. The policy assigned responsibility to key players, including local governments, civil society, the private sector and the United Nations field offices. However, financial and technical assistance was needed to make the policy operational.

46. Her delegation urged the international community, through the United Nations, to establish regional and subregional centres to help States of the region to develop and strengthen national capacities for emergency response. Humanitarian assistance must be need-driven rather than resource-driven, and it must continue long after the television cameras were gone.

47. **Mr. Radzi** (Malaysia) said that the discussions in the Council would help to enhance the capacity of the United Nations and the international community to respond to emergency humanitarian situations in countries affected by natural disasters or conflicts. Most recent natural disasters, unfortunately, had occurred in developing countries and had often affected critical infrastructure, seriously impacting government capacity and hard-won development gains. Greater capacity, quality and accountability were required in the humanitarian response to such emergencies, and policy guidance should be strengthened.

48. Malaysia also had been affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami, which had exposed its vulnerability and served to renew its awareness of the need to build capacity to deal with, and where possible to prevent, such tragedies. The tsunami had clearly demonstrated the vulnerability of developing countries to the effects of natural disasters and climate change. Many environmental experts had lamented the fact that the loss of life and destruction could have been minimized if existing technology and disaster management mechanisms, including effective early warning systems, had been in place. Similarly, in the case of humanitarian crises generated by human conflict, political will was needed to secure the appropriate

means to support the affected populations. He acknowledged the crucial role of non-governmental organizations and civil society in helping Governments and international institutions to provide emergency assistance. Further efforts could be made to identify and include relevant organizations in any national emergency response planning, in conformity with accepted principles.

49. The strategic use of the Council could help to strengthen the United Nations humanitarian policy agenda. It should be capable of identifying and addressing the gaps in the system to promote broad ownership and accountability in issues of common concern. By establishing appropriate procedures, the Council could help the United Nations, to improve its ability to make the best use of humanitarian response capacities at different levels. The proposal to strengthen the financial mechanism by expanding the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) deserved serious consideration.

50. International efforts should go beyond the provision of immediate humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and rehabilitation of the affected communities. There was a need to look at a broader agenda, with the formulation of longer-term goals to help the affected populations. Malaysia hoped that there would be sustained political will on the part of the international community to work towards achieving these goals with special emphasis on national ownership of the recovery process.

51. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan) said that the wide-ranging analysis of the United Nations humanitarian assistance activities was important in view of the increasing demands on the humanitarian system. The challenge of mobilizing effective, timely and adequate humanitarian response commensurate with the nature and scale of crises was indeed formidable. Efforts aimed at strengthening the overall humanitarian response capacity would have the greatest effect if conducted within the basic principles of humanitarian assistance — humanity, neutrality and impartiality — as enshrined in General Assembly resolution 46/182.

52. More attention should be given to strengthening financial mechanisms and expanding essential common humanitarian services so that they could be predictably deployed. The emphasis placed by the Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery on strengthening early warning systems was extremely relevant. The importance of capacity-building, especially for developing countries, had been recognized. Humanitarian relief assistance should be coupled with a development perspective to achieve durable solutions, along with strengthening of logistical and technical capacity.

53. It had often been asserted that unhindered access by humanitarian agencies to all affected areas and segments of populations was an extremely important requirement for effective humanitarian effort. However, the notable progress in the case of Indonesia suggested that the "bottom-up" approach, engaging the local population in both the relief and rehabilitations phases, was the best approach.

54. As a neighbour in the region, Pakistan had been among the first to respond to the human suffering following the catastrophic earthquake in the Indian Ocean. Despite its limited resources and multiple constraints, it had contributed relief goods and participated in relief and rescue operations in the affected areas.

55. **Mr. Zoumanigui** (Guinea) said that the Council had shown realism in its approach to the challenge of humanitarian assistance, as demonstrated in its highly useful reports on the topic. In the transition from relief to recovery, it was important to understand that, unless efforts were made to strengthen local capacity, the living conditions of the affected population would remain essentially the same after the disaster relief process had been completed. Coordination of actions by local, national and international actors assumed a unified strategy and an integrated approach. Of course, any strategy required adequate funding to be effective. It was regrettable that, despite the Council's efforts, many "forgotten emergencies" remained. His delegation welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 59/279 and the Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-2015.

56. His delegation welcomed the attention paid to the situation in Africa in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/87-E/2005/78). The consequences of the triple threat of natural disasters like desertification and locust infestations, human disasters resulting from conflicts, and infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, made the continent especially vulnerable. Although Governments had primary responsibility for finding solutions to those problems, the international community should target its interventions in a more coordinated system. In that

regard, his delegation supported the increased capacity and authority for humanitarian coordinators and resident coordinators of the United Nations system.

57. Although Guinea itself had not experienced a conflict, it had been affected by the conflicts in four of its six neighbouring countries. Although the resulting influx of refugees, environmental degradation, deterioration of social infrastructure and insecurity had hampered its development efforts, its repeated appeals for increased assistance had not been answered. His country would continue to help to defuse tensions and extend assistance to other countries in the West African region because it felt a moral obligation to do so, but, based on the principle of shared responsibility, it wished to draw increased attention to the so-called "forgotten" emergencies.

58. **Mr. Dall'Oglio** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that the current session of the Council offered an opportunity to link the hard lessons learned from past and ongoing crises to the overall United Nations reform process. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was a participating organization in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which provided an inclusive framework that could be the most appropriate one to assess and develop sectoral capacities and enhanced funding facilities.

59. IOM interventions were primarily focused on emergency movement assistance, resettlement, return and reintegration of affected populations forced to migrate. However, non-food relief items, shelter, camp care and maintenance and other basic services were also provided to displaced populations who were without prospect for immediate return.

60. The recent tsunami had underscored the importance of dealing effectively with mental health and psychosocial support in emergency and post-emergency situations. The migration process could create great stresses for the affected populations. Over the past decade, the international community had witnessed an important increase in activities in the area of mental health and psychosocial support. A lack of practical guidance on the development of quality mental health and psychosocial activities often led to well-intentioned efforts that might do more harm than good. He therefore wholeheartedly supported the proposal to set up an inter-agency task force to develop practical guidance in that field and encourage closer inter-agency collaboration in the collective response.

61. **Mr. China** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) pointed out that most of the people affected by natural disasters and crises had agriculture-based livelihoods. As the numbers of people concerned continued to increase, owing in particular to the effects of global warming, FAO continued to expand its complementary role in delivering humanitarian assistance, which accounted for more than a quarter of its total budget. Relatively small as that sum might appear, every dollar spent on preventing a food emergency or promoting early recovery of livelihoods saved 7 to 10 dollars in food aid. For example FAO had been involved in a successful locust control operation in western and north-western Africa, and it had distributed seeds and fertilizers in Afghanistan. It also had ongoing relief programmes in the Democratic Republic of Congo and animal health initiatives and other projects in the Sudan, particularly Darfur.

62. FAO's key comparative advantage lay in matching know-how with resources. In response to the tsunami disaster, it had helped Governments, humanitarian partners and development banks to coordinate and plan the rehabilitation of the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors in the affected countries. Coordination was crucial, especially when the high level of donations and the number of actors presented a risk of oversupply and fragmented assistance that could do more harm than good. FAO was particularly alive to the need to ensure fast donor response, since that always led to more efficient use of resources. However, it had had less success in stimulating donor interest in long-standing food and agricultural crises in parts of Africa.

63. FAO continued to strengthen its cooperation with partner United Nations agencies, most recently with the World Food Programme and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, and expected to go on playing a leading role in helping affected countries and groups to prepare for, respond to and exit from crises situations by drawing on its expertise in the agriculture and food security sectors.

Draft resolution E/2005/L.19

64. **Mr. Cumberbatch** (Cuba) said that although he did not wish to block adoption of the draft resolution,

he was anxious to explain his country's position. There was no consensus on the concept of human security and Cuba, in particular, did not subscribe to that concept as used. There were means other than those outlined in paragraph 16 that might be envisaged, such as, for example, more flexible arrangements between Resident Coordinators and affected countries. He hoped that the question could be taken up in the General Assembly in order to make good the omission.

65. **The President** agreed that the General Assembly would offer an opportunity for further discussion of the issue and said he would take it that the Council wished to adopt draft resolution E/2005/L.19.

66. *It was so decided.*

67. **Ms. Nguyen** (Canada) said that her delegation fully supported the resolution and had noted the comments made regarding the possibility of further discussion in the General Assembly.

68. **The President** proposed that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on transition from relief to development (A/60/89-E/2005/79) and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report on post-tsunami actions undertaken by the World Tourism Organization (E/2005/48).

69. *It was so decided.*

70. **Mr. Egeland** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Emergency Relief Coordinator), noting that the humanitarian affairs segment had been marked by a very positive and constructive atmosphere, said that everyone shared President Clinton's view that the previous six months had reconfirmed the intrinsic value of the United Nations as the primary coordinator and bridge between affected countries and the international community and that the challenge ahead lay in sustaining the momentum for recovery.

71. The panellists had highlighted various aspects of the issues that had been brought to the surface by the tsunami disaster and had shared the valuable lessons they had drawn from their experiences, particularly in respect of civil/military cooperation, private sector engagement, the need for financial transparency and accountability, and response proportionality. Nearly all had underlined the importance of United Nations leadership and coordination in streamlining relief operations and one had drawn attention to the need for a shift in approach from merely responding to disasters to focusing on reducing risk and vulnerability, as reflected in the Hyogo Framework for Action.

72. An independent study on humanitarian response capacity would soon be made available to all delegations. He hoped that would lead to positive developments on which he would be able to report at the Council's next session.

73. Another important part of the ongoing reform would be to update and expand the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and to establish criteria for its allocation. Coordination of United Nations humanitarian action also needed to be strengthened in the field, and a programme of training and capacity-building was accordingly being provided for Resident Coordinators and humanitarian aid coordinators.

74. Other emergencies, particularly in Africa, were crying out for the international community's attention. The humanitarian situation in many areas of the world, dire though it was, could be reversed if adequate funding was provided on a scale similar to that which had been forthcoming for the tsunami-affected communities. He therefore expressed the hope that the new and growing economies would be as generous towards other afflicted communities as they had been to those hit by the tsunami disaster.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.